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Champion Parent Focus: Giving Athletes' Ownership Helps to Create Leadership

GROW stand for:

**Goals + Relationships + Ownership =
Winning**

In today's parent note, we will focus upon Ownership in the GROW equation for developing character in your child athletes through sport.

Today's sport culture is highly dominated by the adults involved in running the programs, so offering Ownership to the athletes is often a forgotten component in youth sports. In the most basic sense, sports are games meant for young people to play. Give your children ownership over their sport, **their games**. In order for virtue to be gained through sport, the game needs to belong to the athletes, not to the parents or coaches.

When parents give athletes ownership in their sport, young people can develop decision-making skills and confidence. Giving ownership over play helps athletes to care about their team, feel responsible for their teammates and be internally motivated to strive to succeed on the team. These qualities help to develop Leadership in young people.

Parental Tips:

- Assure your children choose the



"Do not push too hard with the work, God will take care of everything, and will give you strength to do all that needs to be done. The rest is in His hands. Realize yourself to be entirely in His love and His care and worry about nothing. In these days you should be carried by Him toward your destination, and do what you do more as play than as work, which does not mean that it is not serious: for the most serious thing in the life of a Christian is play."

~Thomas Merton to Jacques Maritain,
June 11, 1963

sports they play;

- Help your children to recognize consequences to their decisions and guide them in making positive choices; and
- Ask your child open-ended questions about practice and/or games instead of offering your opinion.

SUGGESTION: Discuss with your child some problem-solving for moral dilemmas (e.g. how to react to unsportsmanlike behavior, improper locker room behavior, etc.). For instance, you might say: "How do you feel about Joey questioning the referee's call in today's game. How would a 'champion' respond to the ref?" OR "Coach mentioned to us parents that your team was goofing off in the locker room before the game and someone's jersey got ripped. What do you think your team should do about this?"

Cardinal Virtue: Champion Sport Parents are helping their child develop the cardinal virtue of Prudence when they give their child ownership over their sports. Prudence is sound decision-making; making the right decisions for the right reasons. This leads to young people becoming engaged citizens in our society and disciples of our Church.